

**A Message from Illinois
Attorney General
Lisa Madigan**

Recently, the Illinois Legislature passed the Cable and Video Customer Protection Law, which creates stronger consumer protections for cable and all other paid television service.

The law establishes new rules governing service providers, including standards for installation, disconnection, repairs, appointment hours, billing procedures, refunds, termination, rates and rate changes, complaint procedures, customer remedies, and special needs services.

The Cable and Video Customer Protection Law affects nearly all consumers in Illinois who subscribe to paid television services. To ensure that you understand your rights under the new law, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the following information about the new standards and policies it establishes.



Lisa Madigan
Attorney General

Consumer Fraud Hotlines

Chicago
1-800-386-5438
TTY: 1-800-964-3013

Springfield
1-800-243-0618
TTY: 1-877-844-5461

Carbondale
1-800-243-0607
TTY: 1-877-675-9339

Television Service: Understanding Your Rights

Your Rights Under the Cable & Video Customer Protection Law

Advertising, Disclosures, and Notices

Cable and Video television providers must:

- Disclose rates, rules, regulations, and policies clearly and conspicuously on their company Web sites.
- Clearly disclose the rates that will apply at the end of promotional periods offering low introductory rates.
- Offer the lowest-cost basic television and video service as a stand-alone service.
- Provide customers with at least 30 days written notice before increasing rates or eliminating programming.
- Provide all customers with a copy of their general customer service standards.

Installations, Outages, and Service

Cable and Video television providers must:

- Provide installation within seven days of when the customer placed the order.
- Repair service interruptions no later than 24 hours after receiving notice of the disruption.
- Repair any video- or audio-related equipment failure at the company's own expense.
- Limit appointment windows to four-hour time slots.
- Reschedule an appointment at a time convenient to the customer, even if the rescheduled appointment is outside normal business hours, when the company cancels an appointment after 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the appointment. Consumers are entitled to receive a \$25 credit on their billing statement if the company missed the appointment or notified the customer after 5:00 p.m. that the appointment could not be kept.
- Notify customers of the total costs and charges of service and repairs before the service provider performs the service or repair.

Contract Terms, Bills, Payments, and Termination

Cable and Video television providers must:

- Limit contracts for cable and video service to no more than one year.
- Allow customers 60 days from the date service is started to cancel service without penalty.
- Provide bills that are clear, accurate, and understandable.
- Give customers at least 28 days from the date of a bill to pay the charges. Payment is considered to be made on the date the customer mails the check.
- Give 21 days notice before terminating any service following failure to receive payment within the 28-day grace period.
- Stop charging a customer for service within one business day after the customer requests to immediately shut off service.
- Limit early termination fees to the amount the customer saved under the special rate, one-year contract (as compared to the regular rate for service in the absence of the one-year contract).
- Restore at no charge any television service that was terminated without good cause.

Protections for the Visually and Hearing Impaired

Cable and Video television service providers must:

- Deliver or pick up equipment from the homes of visually and hearing impaired customers or provide them with pre-paid shipping and packaging in which to return equipment.
- Provide customers who have mobility impairments with free use of a converter or remote control unit.

Consumer Credits

Under the Cable and Video Customer Protection Law, customers may be eligible for a credit on their billing statement if the company fails to adhere to the new requirements. **Customers may receive credits for the following violations:**

- If the company fails to install service within seven days, it is required to waive 50% of the installation fee or one month of fees for the lowest-cost basic service, whichever is greater. If the company fails to install service within 14 days, the company must waive 100% of the installation fee or one month of fees for the lowest-cost basic service, whichever is greater.
- If the company fails to remedy service interruptions or poor video or audio quality within 48 hours, the company must provide a prorated credit of the total regular monthly charges equal to the number of days of the service interruption.
- Failure to provide notice of customer service standards: \$25.
- Failure to provide low-cost basic service as a stand-alone service: \$25.
- Failure to comply with billing requirements: \$25.
- Failure to give specified notice prior to disconnecting a customer for non-payment of a bill: \$25.
- Failure to waive any fee, charge, or penalty for reconnecting service if the customer was disconnected without good cause: \$25.
- Failure to keep an appointment or to notify the customer of the cancellation one day prior to the appointment: \$25.

Handling a Complaint

If you have a complaint regarding your cable or other paid television service provider, you should:

1. Contact your cable or paid television service provider.
Many complaints and issues can be resolved by visiting the provider's Web site or calling the provider's customer service hotline. Providers are required to have a toll-free number available to consumers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to address issues regarding installation, termination, service, and complaints.

If you are entitled to a credit on your billing statement because your provider failed to adhere to the new requirements in the Cable and Video Customer Protection Law, please wait at least one billing cycle for your billing statement to reflect the credit.

2. File a complaint with the Illinois Attorney General.
To file a complaint against a cable or other paid television service provider (after you have attempted to resolve the matter through the provider's customer service programs described above), please contact the Illinois Attorney General's office at 1-800-386-5438.

You can also download a consumer complaint form on the Illinois Attorney General's Web site at **www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov**.

3. Contact your local municipality.
Customers can also contact their local municipality for further information and assistance regarding their rights under the Cable and Video Customer Protection Law.

